

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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HOLD FOR CUTTER

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OREP PGOV SNAR
SUBJECT: CODELS YATRON AND WOLFF: MEETING WITH
PRIME MINISTER

1. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF CONVERSATION AUGUST 15, 1977,
DURING CALL BY CODELS YATRON AND WOLFF ON PRIME MINISTER/
MINISTER OF WAR GENERAL GUILLERMO ARBULU GALLIANI.

2. RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING PERU'S PERCEPTION
OF ITS SECURITY SITUATION AND THE NEED FOR LARGE ARMED
FORCES, ARBULU NOTED THAT PERU HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN A VICTIM
OF ATTACKS BY ITS NEIGHBORS, BUT HAS ITSELF ALWAYS BEEN
PEACE-LOVING AND NEVER THE AGRESSOR. ARBULU EMPHASIZED
THAT PERU MUST BE SURE OF AN ADEQUATE DEFENSE AGAINST ANY
POSSIBLE THREAT IN THE FUTURE. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE
WHEN PERU SEES STRONG MILITARY FORCES FACING IT FROM ITS
NEIGHBORS. IT IS A SHAME, HE SAID, THAT PERU'S STRATEGIC
LOCATION AND EXISTENCE OF RICH RESOURCES NEAR ITS BORDERS
HAVE OFTEN ATTRACTED AMBITIOUS NEIGHBORS IN THE PAST. WHEN
IT WAS MENTIONED THAT ECUADOR SEEMS TO HAVE THE SAME
CONCERNS TOWARD PERU, THE PRIME MINISTER STATED THAT
THE FACTS WILL SHOW THAT ECUADOR HAS GREATLY INCREASED
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ITS OWN MILITARY POWER IN RECENT YEARS.

3. THE MINISTER EMPHASIZED THAT HE AND OTHER PERUVIAN
GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY LEADERS ARE IN FREQUENT, CLOSE
AND FRANK CONTACT WITH CHILEAN LEADERS AND OTHER NEIGHBOR-
ING COUNTRIES TO INCREASE UNDERSTANDING AND REDUCE TEN-
SIONS. AT A LATER STAGE IN THE CONVERSATION HE BLAMED

THE SENSATIONALIST FOREIGN PRESS FOR CREATING AN ARTIFICIAL WAR-LIKE ATMOSPHERE IN THIS REGION, AND SAID THAT THE CONGRESSMEN COULD HELP IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRUE SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES. HE DENIED FLATLY THAT PERU HAS ANY INTENTIONS TO TAKE OIL PRODUCING TERRITORY FROM ECUADOR AS STATED IN REPORTS MENTIONED TO HIM, ADDING THAT PERU HASN'T EVEN COMPLETED EXPLORATION OF ITS OWN RESERVES. THE CONGRESSMEN ASSURED THE PRIME MINISTER THAT THEIR VISIT TO PERU REFLECTS U.S. INTEREST IN LATIN AMERICA AND A DESIRE TO IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING AND COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES.

4. THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ASKED WHETHER HE IS SATISFIED WITH THE QUALITY OF THE SOVIET EQUIPMENT WHICH PERU HAS PURCHASED AND ABOUT THE POSSIBLE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THESE PURCHASES. IN RESPONSE, HE SAID THAT THE QUALITY WAS SATISFACTORY, AND WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT PERU HAD PURCHASED SOVIET ARMS SINCE ADEQUATE EQUIPMENT FOR NEEDED MODERNIZATION OF ITS FORCES WAS NOT AVAILABLE TO PERU FROM THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER COUNTRIES. HE SAID THAT TRAINING VISITS TO THE SOVIET UNION AND THE PRESENCE OF SOME SOVIET TECHNICIANS IN PERU WILL CONTINUE TO BE NECESSARY FOR TRAINING PURPOSES IN CONNECTION WITH THE EQUIPMENT PURCHASED, JUST AS HAS BEEN THE CASE IN THE PAST WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE SAID SUCH ASSOCIATIONS WILL BE HELD TO A MINIMUM. THE PRIME MINISTER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAS EMPHATIC THAT THERE ARE NO LARGER POLITICAL OR IDEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE SOVIET ARMS PURCHASES.

5. THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ASKED ABOUT THE GOP'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NARCOTICS THREAT, IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT PERU IS A PRIMARY SOURCE OF ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN COCA AND COCAINE. ARBULU AGREED THAT THE DRUG PROBLEM IS A MAJOR ONE AND THAT FULL COOPERATION IS NECESSARY BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES. HE RECALLED THAT MR. CARLYLE MAW HAD RAISED THIS PROBLEM DURING HIS VISITS TO LIMA LAST YEAR, AND HAD OFFERED ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION TOWARD A JOINT STUDY OF A CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM. NOTING THAT RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN THE GOP FOR DEALING WITH THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM HAS BEEN DIVIDED, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT A NEW LAW SOON TO BE PROMULGATED WILL BETTER FIX RESPONSIBILITIES AND ASSURE COORDINATION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT WHILE INCREASING PENALTIES FOR SERIOUS OFFENDERS.

6. IN HIS FINAL REMARKS THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT WHILE HE HAD DISAGREED WITH TRADITIONAL U.S. POLICY TOWARD LATIN AMERICA IN THE PAST, WHICH WAS CHARACTERIZED

BY INDIFFERENCE, HE IS VERY ENCOURAGED WITH PRESIDENT
CARTER'S ANNOUNCED POLICIES. HE MENTIONED ESPECIALLY
THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE IMPORTANCE ASCRIBED TO
LATIN AMERICA BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. HE PRAISED
MRS. CARTER'S RECENT VISIT IN THIS REGARD.

7. THIS MEMCON CLEARED BY CODELS YATRON AND WOLFF PER SANTIAGO
6720. DEPT MAY DECLASSIFY THIS MESSAGE IF DESIRED. SHLAUDEMAM

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